



**First Quarter FY 2009
Performance Monitoring Report
October 1-December 31, 2008**

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Palestinian Faculty Development Program

AMIDEAST partners with the Open Society Institute (OSI)/Soros Foundation, and varying university partners. PhD and MA graduates and short-term fellows were mobilized to share the knowledge and skills gained with their peers and colleagues. The ultimate goal of the program is to improve the quality of higher education, and support the emergence of a new generation of academic leaders.

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PALESTINIAN FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (PFDP)

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Executive Summary

The first quarter of FY09 involved some exciting new development and a continuation of many of the same activities integral to the PFDP over the previous three years. PhD grantee progress continued with little fanfare with certain grantees from Cohort I crossing critical thresholds in terms of passing comprehensive exams and beginning their dissertation research. Similarly, the visa processing and placement of the 10 Short Term Fellows continued with one critical hitch; the five STF grantees from Gaza were denied permission to visit Jerusalem for their visa interviews and their scholarships are now threatened. Progress on five Faculty Grants began and planning for the January 2009 Seminar for Excellence in Teaching was also on schedule.

In terms of new developments a Faculty Development Series Round Table Discussion involving the USAID Mission Director and twenty senior academics representing all major West Bank universities launched a serious discussion about faculty development priorities and needs. The PFDP has now embarked on a second major needs assessment with the aim of possibly reshaping certain program components in 2009. Furthermore, the PFDP has received provisional approval from USAID to embark on a major, landmark study of national undergraduate teaching practice. This study will gather multi-year data on the teaching of undergraduate courses in order to track changes over time and measure the alignment of teaching with recommendations for improvement in teaching methods and materials. Such a study could become a catalyst for renewed attention on the critical link between what is being done and what needs to be done to improve the quality of Palestinian universities.

PFDP Program Activity

Higher Education Round Table Discussion

The Palestinian Faculty Development Program (PFDP) hosted a round table discussion on November 5, 2008 with Palestinian university presidents, vice presidents and other key decision makers in Palestinian higher education. Twenty faculty representing eleven Palestinian universities came together to discuss critical needs within the higher education sector. The USAID Mission Director, Dr. Howard Sumka, launched the event with some opening remarks.

The PFDP and USAID are particularly interested in further identifying and supporting faculty development, as well as building capacity among university administrators. The event was structured around two specific questions: 1) What are critical faculty development needs and priorities within Palestinian higher education and how can these be better supported? 2) What are the priorities of higher education administrators and what would be the best types of technical assistance or training for addressing these needs?



The PFDP Chief of Party, Dr. Chris Shinn facilitated much of the discussion. He noted, “Faculty development, leadership and good management are inextricably linked with delivering a quality education. We must think beyond the significant challenges confronting higher education and focus on specific ways we can improve teaching.” The PFDP hosted this VIP event as a basis for launching a higher education needs assessment which will take place in the coming months and involve outreach to many education institutions in the West Bank and Gaza. A transcript summary of the discussion can be found in Annex A.

In December the COP began drafting the needs assessment document, an academic survey modeled in form and format on the first needs assessment. The eight-page survey includes 35 questions designed to elicit a better understanding of faculty priorities and needs in four areas: 1) institutionalizing faculty development; 2) administrative training; 3) faculty grants; and 4) the academic colloquium. The design of the survey received important input and revisions from USAID and OSI. It will be translated into Arabic and disseminated to all Palestinian faculty.

National Undergraduate Study in Teaching Practice

March 2009 will represent the mid-way point for the PFDP – three and a half years into the seven-year life of the project. A comprehensive study at this stage, with a follow-on comparative assessment at the end of the project, will provide a wealth of information that could help the PFDP target initiatives for the remaining years of the project. In addition, such a study will be the first of its kind, and will provide the higher education community, as well as the general donor community, invaluable information on questions like: What is the state of teaching practice among Palestinian universities and colleges? What are teachers and students doing in a typical university classroom?

What materials and pedagogical approaches are commonly used? How are teachers assessing student learning?

A study of this nature will gather multi-year data on the teaching of undergraduate courses in order to track changes over time and measure the alignment of teaching with recommendations for improvement in teaching methods and materials. Such a study could become a catalyst for renewed attention on the critical link between what is being done and what needs to be done to improve the quality of Palestinian universities. This study will also inform the Ministry of Education and Higher Education's (MOEHE) recently released National Teaching Education Strategy (NTES) and on-going efforts to translate the NTES into reforms within university teacher education programs. AMIDEAST approached USAID to embark on such a study and has received provision approval.

Short Term Fellowships

OSI was able to secure all ten finalists of the Short term Fellowship- Cohort III with university placement offers in the US. The OSI section below provides more details on these placements. Because of the Gaza siege followed by the war the five Gaza finalists have not been able to begin their visa processing so they will be deferred to next year. The five West Bank finalists received their visas; four will travel in January and one in May 2009. A pre-departure orientation for the West Bank group will take place on January 5, 2009.

Faculty Grants

Five faculty grants, four in West Bank and one in Gaza, were signed this quarter. It is expected that the grants are implemented within one year of signing. The next quarterly report will highlight the progress in the grants. Below is a summary list.

Faculty Grants –Cohort I- Signed November 2008

	Title & Description of Activity	Principle Contact	Participating Universities	Amount
1	<u>Standards and codes for transformation of lost space to more vivid green places in Palestine</u> The objective of this project is to redefine two main courses taught in Department of Architecture and Department of Geography. "A text book will be published in English and Arabic to ensure the benefit for various schools in and outside Palestine."	Salem Thawaba Urban Planning	Birzeit University	\$24,840
2	<u>Training and Development of Pedagogical Multimedia Based Materials for Teaching</u> The project aims at train faculty in the Bethlehem Faculty of Arts on ways to produce multimedia based material for teaching and for use in and outside the class by conducting two workshops.	Qustandi M Shomali Arts/ Journalism	Bethlehem University	\$4,900.

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3	<u>Photographic Perception of Spaces</u> This project will involve a two-week student workshop within the course of Advanced Urban Design with the aims at using photography as a means of evaluating physical, social and economic processes of urban spaces.	Yazid N Anani Urban Planning	Birzeit University	\$5,000
4	<u>A case-based approach in pre-service teacher education- Teaching Education Psychology</u> The project aims to develop a teaching course in the Education Diploma of BZU called Educational Psychology. BZU is currently in the process of reviewing and enhancing their education diploma program as part of the National Teacher Education Strategy of Palestine.	Maher Hashweh Education and Psychology	Birzeit University	\$24,500
5	Developing the civic education, democracy, and human rights curriculum of al-Azhar University in Gaza	Riad El Eilah	Azhar University	\$24,990
Total Funding Expected in WB and Gaza				\$251,626

Collaborative Projects in Teaching (CPT)

Dr. Sami Basha from Bethlehem University is the designated Project Director for PFDP’s Collaborative Projects in Teaching (CPT). His grant addresses special needs education. A focus of his grant will be to develop university curricula for students enrolled in pre-service teacher education programs.



The longer term aims of his agenda are to eventually create a BA minor specifically in special education because such a program does not exist anywhere in Palestine. Dr. Basha’s grant also encourages faculty networking, provides leadership and research opportunities and allows for direct engagement of two international resource faculty.

During the four-day conference that was held at the Intercontinental Hotel in Bethlehem from 16-19 of October, 2008. Dr. Basha was supported by Professor Rita Sidoli from the University of Sacro Cuore of Milan, Italy. Dr. Sidoli has over thirty years of experience teaching and researching on special needs education.

Fourteen Palestinian faculty representing eight universities and colleges as well the Ministry of Education attended. The conference included a day trip to Ephpheta Paul VI for Audio-phonetic Rehabilitation center, a meeting with 4 school principals from Bethlehem area to get their perspectives on this topic, in addition to session on how to construct and develop course outlines on special needs based on individual university needs This same group of faculty will engage in

ongoing activities during the academic year, as well as reconvene in January 2009 for a follow-up session, and a final conference in the summer of 2009. A summary of the evaluations completed by the participants after the seminar can be found in Annex B.

Seminar for Excellence in Teaching

Planning has occurred for Part II of the Cohort II Seminar for Excellence in Teaching. The CEU team is due to arrive in Jericho from January 26 to February 2. Thirty trainees are expected to attend. Strategic development of the summer SET Master Trainer Course will be incorporated into the SET Part II program. A two-day seminar with alumni of SET will help evaluate the training and provide insight on the curriculum development of the Master Training Course. Twelve alumni are expected to attend.

Central European University Administrative Seminars

PFDP promoted the 2009 round of CEU Administrative Seminars. Five Seminars will be offered in 2009 in Budapest. Each seminar is designed to appeal to higher education faculty holding relevant senior administrative responsibilities at their university or college. The call for applications went to all university vice-presidents for academic affairs to nominate the appropriate faculty members. The seminars are:

- QUALITY ENHANCEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION: February 15-19, 2009
- NEW ISSUES IN UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT – FROM GOOD GOVERNANCE TO TRANSPARENCY: March 2-5, 2009
- HOW TO CREATE AN INTEGRATED STUDENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Dates: April 26-30, 2009
- DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING TEACHING AND LEARNING SUPPORT FOR YOUR FACULTY: June 1- 4, 2009
- FUNDRAISING: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES: July 1-4, 2009

PFDP Newsletter and University Outreach

The first PFDP newsletter was issued in November 2008. PFDP intends to issue the newsletter on a quarterly basis and distribute it to all the West Bank and Gaza universities. Overall, 1200 copies of the newsletter have been circulated to relevant outlets.

The PFDP Outreach and Program Coordinator conducted university outreach visits to Birzeit, Bethlehem, AnNajah National, Hebron and Polytechnic Universities in December and additional visits are scheduled for January and February to promote upcoming PFDP 2009 events activities. These activities are:

- Short Term Fellow recruitment for 2010
- PFDP Needs Assessment Instrument
- CEU Winter Management Seminars
- Academic Colloquium summer 2009

PFDP Grantees News and Achievements

The PFDP currently has 32 grantees pursuing their PhDs in the US. Their ongoing efforts constitute a silent level of engagement that often goes unnoticed. This section of the quarterly report endeavors to highlight notable achievements of Fellows each quarter.

PFDP Grantee News

Nasser Abu Noor passed his comprehensive exams.

Ola Khalili passed her comprehensive exams.

Wasim Al Habil, having graduated nearly two years early remains in Jordan waiting to enter Gaza.

Open Society Institute Activity

Ongoing Contact with Grantees and Host Universities

Throughout the quarter OSI staff:

- Responded to grantee questions about programmatic issues;
- Answered questions from host universities about issues such as grantee health insurance coverage and grantee tuition / fees billing;
- Facilitated grantee travel by obtaining USAID approval on DS-2019s
- Conducted outreach to current and potential new host universities by e-mail and phone;
- Corresponded with host universities regarding the arrival of STF Cohort III first visit grantees, especially the 5 grantees from Gaza.

Cohort III Short-Term Fellow (STF) First Visit Arrangements

In October OSI sent placement packets for 10 Cohort III Short-Term Fellows to potential host universities. Nine cohort III STFs are scheduled to come to the US in January 2009, and a tenth, Dr. Hassan Arafat, will begin his visit in May 2009. The documents in the packets included: a) a cover letter; finalist files with interview comment summaries; c) a program and Short-Term Visiting Fellow component overview; d) instructions for notifying OSI of interest; and f) a host university application. Eighty packets were mailed to 80 departmental chairs, graduate studies deans, and selected faculty members at 60 universities.

Mailings followed preparatory work OSI conducted earlier in order to identify strong potential host departments and mentors. This research was challenging, as many of the Cohort III STFs are in fields that were not initially eligible for the Short-Term Fellows component, such as English / Literature, Environmental Studies, and English / TESOL. Others were in the original PFDP fields of urban planning and social work.

Follow up by phone and e-mail continued through mid-October. Final placements for 10 Short-Term Visiting Fellows were completed by early November. The placements are as follows:

1. *Khaled Abed Rabbo* – University of New Mexico’s Department of Language, Literacy and Sociocultural Studies. Khaled declined a placement in the Department of Languages, Literatures and Linguistics at Indiana State.
2. *Mohammed El-Sahhar* -- University of Illinois at Chicago's School of Public Health. Mohammed decline placement offers from the University of Hawaii and the State University of New York--Albany.
3. *Wael Abu Hassan* -- California State University at Northridge's Department of Psychology, Subsection in Clinical and Behavioral Sciences. Wael declined an offer from the University of Kentucky's College of Social Work.
4. *Ahed Helles* - University of Florida's College of Design, Construction and Planning. UF was one of Ahed’s application placement preferences. Ahed also had an offer from Cornell University’s Department of City and Regional Planning.
5. *Ala Al-Ghoul* -- University of Indiana--Bloomington, English Department.
6. *Shawqi Ghannam* -- University of Indiana--Bloomington, English Department.
7. *Yusuf Subuh* -- Utah State University, Utah Water Research Laboratory. This program was one of Yusuf’s application placement preferences.
8. *Khaled El-Sousi* -- Iowa State University's Department of Civil, Construction, & Environmental Engineering. This department was one of the placement preferences in Khaled’s application.
9. *Munir Serhan* – Iowa State University's Department of Civil, Construction, & Environmental Engineering.
10. *Hassan Arafat* – (Begins Visit in May 2009) -- Utah State University, Utah Water Research Laboratory.

Five STF’s from Cohort III are from Gaza: Al-Ghoul, El-Sahhar, Ghannam, El-Sousi, and Helles. We expect that their departures may be delayed due to the ongoing closure of Gaza.

Throughout the quarter OSI staff members were in contact with host university contacts to answer questions about the STF program’s structure, timing, and requirements. In December, Patrick Hynes and Joe Glicksberg were in close communication with host university contacts and grantee mentors to update them about expected arrival times of grantees, changes in travel times, arrival hotel information, and to inquire about airport meeting arrangements. OSI relayed arrival information to grantees directly and through AMIDEAST and facilitated grantee-mentor contact by e-mail and phone. OSI also coordinated with the AMIDEAST staff members making grantee travel arrangements. OSI staff sent host university contacts and grantee mentors detailed information about the Short-Term Visiting Fellowship component. In addition, OSI staff updated the standardized “Short-Term Visit Plans” form that mentors will fill out in conjunction with grantees to inform the PFDP of the specific activities grantees will take towards fulfilling the program’s goals during their visits.

OSI staff updated the Short-Term Visiting Fellow Grant and Terms and Conditions letters in early December. Originals will be kept on file after having been countersigned by grantees. In mid-December OSI set up electronic files for all Cohort III Short-Term Visiting Fellows in its grants database / monitoring software program, GrantSQL.

Second Visit Arrangements for STFs in Cohorts I and II

OSI remains in contact with several STFs from Cohorts I and II regarding second visit planning: Said Al-Koni, Abdelfattah Shamleh, and Sahar Natsheh (all Cohort I) and Bilal Al-Shafii (Cohort II). None have confirmed when they plan to undertake their second visits yet, but all of their host universities have relayed that they will be glad to host them again.

PFDP Grantee Conference Planning

In November OSI confirmed arrangements with the University of Florida to host the third annual PFDP Grantee Fellows' Conference. The conference will be held at the Department of Urban and Regional Planning of the College of Design, Construction and Planning in Gainesville, Florida from March 20-22, 2009. Dr. Christopher Silver, the Dean of the College, has been a strong supporter of the PFDP since its inauguration, and is actively participating in event planning.

In December, OSI confirmed several events for the conference. One confirmed speaker is Dr. Ken Wald, who holds the chair of Distinguished Professor of Political Science at the University of Florida. Dr. Wald will speak about the role of religion in US politics. A second series of events will be several interactive training workshops led by a staff member of the "Connexions" Project based at Rice University. The workshops will focus on methods for constructing course syllabi using open-access online tools and materials. A third series of events will be based on a recurring grantee suggestion in the evaluations following last year's conference. This event will be a set of discipline-based panels at which grantees will present and discuss their research work with their peers. A daytrip to St. Augustine is also being planned. The core event of the trip will be a visit to worksites of the University of Florida's Historic Preservation Project in the city's historic district.

OSI is looking to engage a keynote speaker from USAID, who would reinforce the support of the US government for the PFDP, or elsewhere. Conference planning remains ongoing.

Mysoon Abu El-Nour Return to Gaza

Due to the ongoing domestic violence issue concerning the Abu El Nours, OSI worked with AMIDEAST, USAID, and the University of Akron in September and October to facilitate Mysoon Abu El-Nour's return to Gaza at her request. With the assistance of AMIDEAST employee Noor Tawil, Mysoon and her children flew from Columbus, Ohio to Amman on October 13. She then returned to Gaza on October 26 with the help of USAID coordination. On December 4 OSI sent Mysoon a letter prepared in consultation with AMIDEAST and USAID outlining the terms of her fellowship while she is in Gaza. Mysoon remains enrolled at the University of Akron and is doing coursework in Gaza.

Administration and Reporting

Financial:

Future Directions: The COP responded to a request from the USAID CTO to submit a concept proposal for new directions for the PFDP. The concept proposal took into account logical directions for their project in light of the National Teacher Education Strategy endorsed by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. It is AMIDEAST's understanding that if a Congressional Supplemental bill is pursued and approved by Congress that significant additional funds may be allocated to the project. The concept proposal is attached as Annex C.

ANNEX A

Higher Education Round Table: Summary based on videotaped transcripts

After an introduction by the Chief of Party, Chris Shinn, opening remarks by USAID Mission Director Howard Sumka, and further background comments from Chris Shinn, the group of twenty senior faculty from twelve institutions began an earnest and serious two hour discussion. The first seventy minutes involved every member around the table voicing some opinions on the following question:

What are critical faculty development needs and priorities within Palestinian higher education and how can these be better supported?

Two themes seemed to emerge around this question which is summarized below, along with a range of other ideas or comments which are also listed in bullet points.

There was broad interest in institutionalizing the types of faculty development that PFDP is now undertaking. The importance of having a self-sustaining center or unit that focuses on faculty development internally was expressed. However, there is a challenge in finding qualified faculty willing to lead or coordinate such an effort and developing sustainability in the process. In some cases, creating a new “center” within a university may not make sense if there already exists current structures or expertise in other areas. Institutionalizing faculty development could incorporate or draw from the existing Quality Assurance Units within each institution. There is a need to empower and better support faculty already involved in the Quality Assurance Units.

It is essential for universities to instill a culture of teaching and learning. In order for this to occur there needs to be attitudinal change among senior administrators and for university leaders to prioritize internal faculty development. Need for a more liberal interpretation of the role of the university, not just about teaching a given subject but developing well-rounded adults.

The second common theme revolved around the need to introduce more training or workshops for faculty in pedagogy; training that may not be discipline specific and focuses on methods. It was suggested to expand attendance of existing PFDP components like the Seminar for Excellence in Teaching. In addition, it was suggested to train faculty to be able to deal with new students needing remedial courses in wide array of subjects. The lower entering academic caliber of new students from public schools to university is increasingly a challenge and requires faculty to adapt and adjust course work and teaching methods. Similarly, there was a need for training even new faculty receiving PhDs in how to teach. The American doctorate does not necessarily prepare faculty on how to be good teachers.

Other ideas that seemed to stand alone but typically had concurrence from more than one attendee include the following:

- Focus on infrastructural issues, for example, improving libraries or introduction of IT into higher education, such as wireless systems and computer usage on behalf of faculty (mentioned by two faculty).
- Counter comment about infrastructure; having qualified faculty is really part and parcel of having a functioning university – the real infrastructure is the “faculty.”

- Need for more say on how PFDP is run. The project is too paternalistic. Need to have universities actively engaged so the PFDP programs are demand driven, whether that be responding to specific kinds of training or targeting specific fields for scholarships (mentioned by two faculty).
- Need broader support for peer mentoring programs across more institutions for new faculty (mentioned by two faculty).
- Wide consensus on need for PhD scholarships – math, sciences, IT, computer science. Various fields were mentioned. There is chronic shortage of qualified faculty in most disciplines (mentioned by many faculty).
- Need more comprehensive English taught for faculty.
- Introduce more visiting American faculty, such as exchanges whereby a Palestinian faculty member goes to teach for a semester in the US and the American comes to teach similar courses at the host Palestinian university (mentioned by two faculty).
- Support more DVC sessions with faculty from other universities.
- More support of scientific research or simply quality research.
- Need for greater flexibility for Short-Term Fellowships, suggesting summer visits and greater fields of study.
- School counseling as a profession and academic discipline is badly in need of attention and support in terms of teacher training and faculty development.

The final fifty minutes of the discussion involved Dr. Kathleen Matheos' presentation about one model of professional development for higher education administrators and follow-on discussion based on the second question:

What are the priorities of higher education administrators and what would be the best types of technical assistance or training for addressing these needs?

In general, the discussion around this question was more reflective with few concrete ideas presented and several challenges listed. Other questions arose including: How do you develop a culture that is collaborative and supportive among university administrators? What kind of administrator is needed for the 21st century university? What kind of university structure effectively supports such administration? Where is the necessary leadership and vision coming from? The difference between management and leadership is an important distinction.

There was only one direct comment on CHERD's certificate program presented by Kathleen. The individual did not feel it was practical to have such a certificate program mandatory or a pre-condition for senior level administrators (neither were mentioned by Kathleen), but it was suggested that Palestinian higher education start slowly and perhaps consider a 40-hour course that introduces a variety of the topics covered in the 8-course certificate program.

One theme that emerged was the recognition of the need for better ensuring a smooth transition when new faculty are appointed to new leadership positions. Universities don't have a system for such transitions or transference of knowledge on how to do specific administrative functions. Intuitive management; learning by doing seems to prevail. The process of recruitment and selection is not standardized and often lacks proper criteria for selecting individuals. It is often difficult to recruit middle managers like deans and chairs of departments. Faculty administration is not considered a career track and offers few extra benefits. There is a need for an incentive structure.

However, some faculty have an inclination to be administrators and like the responsibility; they are attracted to such positions and have a vested interest in changing things for the better. One suggestion concerning this theme involved orchestrating regular meetings among deans or chairs from various institutions to discuss administrative challenges and solutions, network and share experiences. A couple faculty questioned why it is necessary for all universities to have a 3 year rotation for deans, suggesting this was too short a term.

Another challenge mentioned was overlapping university regulations and by-laws which make for an often confusing landscape for getting things accomplished. Even the best administrators may not know how to respond successfully in such a chaotic environment. There was some emphasis on examining professional development of administration in a holistic manner, so that quality assurance is linked to student assessment of faculty which is linked to annual reports submitted to deans or others which all culminate in a structure of performance-based appraisals of faculty and administrators.

In this regard, the World Bank's Tertiary Education Program representative noted their ongoing effort toward systemic improvements in higher education administration, most notably through the most recent Quality Assurance Fund grant solicitation on institutional self-assessment. There was acknowledgement from those seated at the table of this effort and their university's participation. Other stand alone ideas or issues discussed include the following bullet points:

- Skill development of university administrators could focus on such things as negotiation and communication skills.
- Need for much closer coupling of professional development and program development so that new programs or initiatives develop in tandem with properly trained staff.
- Need for strategic planning on behalf of senior leadership. Although some felt the planning takes place, but the follow-through, the implementation is what is really lacking.
- Universities need major support on the introduction and efficient use of computers so that the bureaucracy of university administration, particularly at the middle management level is much more efficient because 60% of the job is simply pushing paper.
- One faculty member mentioned the shortcoming of the CEU administrative seminars noting they need to be longer, more comprehensive and more inclusive.
- It was suggested for the PFDP to offer visits to US universities so that Palestinian faculty have a chance to see how a peer in a similar position in a similar type of institution conducts their job. Promote this type of short-term technical training.

Please write your own comments and suggestions to the questions below:

1. What were the 3 most interesting or practical elements of the program for you?

- Group work and discussions (mentioned twice)
- Student's visit (mentioned 3 times)
- Sharing individual experiences from group members and networking (mentioned 4 times).
- The school visit (mentioned 5 times)
- Dr. Sami's presentations
- Organizing the ideas of the project
- Creating new aspects and attitudes towards working with individuals with special needs
- The presentations of the moderators was interesting and simple
- Meeting with the principles of special needs schools
- Getting together for dinner
- Brainstorming for ideas

2- What did you dislike or would like to change in the next 2009 Institute:

- The workshop was very intensive (mentioned 4 times)
- Would have liked to see more of the clinical part not only theory.
- Nothing
- I hope that we can build a strategic plan for Palestine for working with Special Needs children and a module of inclusive education.
- Enlarging the number of participants to include faculty from various universities
- The hall was not suitable(mentioned twice)
- The workshop should be more than 4 days it wasn't enough
- Have more than one expert
- Should have more assignments

3- What was your most positive experience during this 4 – day Fall Institute?

- Being introduced to organization that work with special needs
- Networking and sharing experiences (mentioned 4 times)
- New experience
- Meeting with Dr. Sidoli and Dr. Basha, they gave me strength and motivation to continue my work.
- The atmosphere was good although the members were not equal in their level of knowledge
- Working on building a curriculum
- Learning how to understand others who are different(mentioned twice)
- Getting in touch with somebody from the ministry
- Learning new approaches in the field and meeting Dr. Sidoli

4- Who would you like to see participating in future activities for this project, what experts were missing?

- The parents(mentioned twice)
- Other university students
- Teachers from regular schools
- An-Najah University, Parents, Success stories
- Jamilleh Subuh, Iman Ghosheh, Samer Odeh RWTC and AMira Basma
- Another expert in specific area in special needs.
- All were available but we could invite some experts from occupational science
- He has a lot of energy and motivation and wants to hope for a change in the system
- Children with special needs, their voices need to be heard(mentioned twice)

5 – What comments do you have on Sami and Rita’s participation/facilitation during the 4 day conference?

Sami :

- He is great with massive experience
- Nice and good presentations
- Excellent
- Wonderful
- Allow me to speak without permission!
- He was very good but he needed another person to help him
- He is very enthusiastic and motivated in his field
- A good motivator who has creative ways of presenting ideas/ good organizer
- Well organized, motivated very knowledgeable

Rita :

- She had a lot of experience however language was a problem, she is not familiar with the Arabic reality in this field.
- Impressive and kind woman
- Excellent
- Very good
- A great source in special education
- Her presentations needed more visual aid /Power point (mentioned 3 times)
- Very knowledgeable I really benefited from her on educational and ethical matters
- She was the balance of the workshop as she was the reference point when the group disagreed on matters
- Full of experience/ humanitarian/ humble believes in what she does , very inspiring
- Very professional

ANNEX C



CONCEPT PROPOSAL
The Palestinian Faculty Development Program (PFDP):
Integrating Pre-Service Teacher Training

Background

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) has identified four key priority areas for the higher education sector in the Education Development Strategic Plan 2008-2012. These include: 1) increasing access for all students; 2) improving the quality of teaching and learning; 3) developing the capacity for planning and management; and 4) realizing a gradual conversion of the higher education sector from supply-oriented to demand-oriented. The second and third objectives above directly correspond to the aims of the PFDP. In addition, the MOEHE has endorsed the first ever National Teacher Education Strategy (NTES). The NTES was developed to improve the quality of basic education in Palestine by identifying specific policies and reforms for universities engaged in teacher education, as well as improve the capacity of the MOEHE to manage the teacher education system.

The NTES outlines five strategic areas. Two of these, “Teacher Education Programs” and “Continuing Professional Development Programs” directly correspond to the aims of PFDP. Key recommendations for teacher education programs include developing higher education institutions in terms of faculty development in tandem with reforming diploma, BA and MA programs for kindergarten, primary and secondary levels. The NTES also highlighted the need for curriculum development, improved pedagogy and research, as well as the exchange of experiences between faculty and the injection of international standards:

Improving the quality of these programs... requires specifying the characteristics of teacher education programs at higher education institutions as well as for programs for educational specialists, that is, special education teachers, supervisors and school counselors. It is essential that these characteristics be in harmony with the new international trends in the curriculum of teacher education programs, with appropriate teaching and learning methods used in teacher education and with international experiences in how to benefit from practical experiences at the schools within teacher education programs (NTES, p. 20).

UNESCO has led the effort to develop the NTES and produce a five-year (2009-2014) implementation plan¹. The framework already laid out includes defining and adopting criteria for new and revised curricula, addressing teaching and learning methodology, and creating committees for the development of education programs in each tertiary education institution offering pre-service training. In the context of building the capacity of these institutions, the plan also highlights the critical need to develop early childhood education programs, create the first ever special needs education program and completely reform the existing approach to training school counselors.

PFDP and Pre-Service Teaching Training

AMIDEAST proposes expanding the PFDP to include investing in pre-service teacher training at Palestinian universities. The goals of the PFDP are to promote the expansion, retention, and

¹ Khader, Sami. *Teacher Education Strategy in Palestine; the proposed implementation plan*. UNESCO, March 2008.

professional development of promising academics teaching in the social sciences and humanities. In addition, the PFDP aims to revitalize and reform teaching in these areas at Palestinian higher education institutions, as well as promote an institutional culture of teaching and learning. These objectives are currently realized through ten different program components. Some of these components already provide a clear mechanism for how the PFDP can support pre-service teacher training, while new initiatives will also need to be developed.

AMIDEAST's strategic approach is based on having identified four areas where Palestinian university teacher education programs need reforms. These four areas described below reflect international trends in pre-service teacher training over the last decade and are also identified in the NTES implantation plan. The importance and weighting of these four types of reforms will need to be negotiated and managed in partnership with each institution and the MOEHE. Importantly, the World Bank's Tertiary Education Program is sponsoring internal self-assessments of teacher education programs. Results of these programmatic audits should be known in the spring of 2009. AMIDEAST proposes using these internal assessments, as well as its own faculty development needs assessment, also due to be completed in March 2009, to determine how best to engineer appropriate interventions. AMIDEAST also suggests organizing a series of round table discussions with the deans of education representing university pre-service teacher training programs in order to better understand how to move forward. The needs are many and the landscape is complicated; the PFDP will need to be selective in terms of what institutions to engage and how².

1. Curriculum reform based on key competencies

Curriculum content and concepts of the curriculum need to be reviewed and re-imagined in the designated programs. In essence, what to teach in pre-service training and how to teach it defines the foundation of professional training for future teachers. AMIDEAST intends to work with academic teams to create new curricula, as well as explore the reliance on individual academic disciplines. The key is to provide future teachers with tools in the form of theoretical, cultural and critical knowledge that is truly useful to teaching in real classroom situations. In this sense, the core of the curriculum should focus on the professional act itself, whereas the disciplines should be taught as foundation courses for the teaching of school subjects. This emphasis corresponds to recent MOEHE directives, although few university teacher education programs have fully and successfully integrated a competency-based pre-service approach. Professional competencies should cover four areas of pedagogical intervention: a) the design and management of teaching and learning situations; b) adaptation of teaching; c) the management of student assessment; and d) competencies required to collaborate during student training. This approach implies a more clinical training regime designed to facilitate the acquisition of required competencies by each student. Finally, it also necessitates appropriate systems for evaluating competencies different from those customary in a university setting, such as exams and assignments, so that minimal and accessible competency thresholds are judged at the end of pre-service training.

2. Integration of theory and practice through university/school partnerships

International trends in pre-service training are moving away from the idea that students first acquire knowledge in their theory courses and then apply such knowledge in practice. The integration of theory and practice involves rethinking career paths of future teachers in relation to practical training and university/school partnerships. In this regard, AMIDEAST will explore fruitful partnerships between

² In terms of the higher education sector there are three well-developed pre-service teacher education programs that the PFDP could work with in the West Bank: Al Quds University, Bethlehem University and Birzeit University. Both An-Najah and Hebron universities have not signed the ATC and will not likely sign it. Arab American University and Palestine Polytechnic Universities do not have pre-service training programs. The two fully governmental universities supported by the MOEHE, Palestine Technical University in Khadourie and Al Aqsa University in Gaza could also be beneficiaries. Al Azhar University has a relevant program and has signed the ATC.

faculties of education and schools, as well as between university trainers and teachers. Theory courses must focus on the practicum experience in order to highlight its theoretical implications and reapply these within the training. AMIDEAST would seek to better integrate this process through established internships designed to introduce new teachers progressively into the profession with student teachers being coached and mentored. Some Palestinian universities already have limited school partnerships. These need to be expanded and further developed. Similarly, certain forms of research particularly relevant to pre-service training would be encouraged, such as action research and collaborative research.

3. Faculty development of university trainers

In any pre-service training reform project the university trainers or faculty play a key role. Consequently, AMIDEAST will survey the needs and skills of the relevant faculty and administrators in order to design an appropriate faculty development strategy. The focus will be two-pronged: 1) developing pedagogical training seminars offered locally and tailored to the needs of that particular teacher education program; 2) recruiting, selecting and placing select faculty in single year academic certificate or masters degree programs at specific US universities. AMIDEAST and OSI will leverage its existing network of 20 US universities in order to ensure these individuals receive a first class academic experience targeting both general pedagogy and content specific knowledge. In essence, AMIDEAST will develop a set of pathways designed to strengthen faculty development at each of the three institutions, thereby strengthening the quality of teachers embarking on school teaching careers.

4. Integration of information, communication technology (ICT) into teacher training

Preparing future teachers requires ongoing integration of ICTs in teacher training and addressing this challenge in pre-service education programs is the most direct and cost-effective approach to preparing Palestinian school teachers for the 21st century. However, Palestinian pre-service training programs poorly integrate ICTs in professional practice. Therefore, AMIDEAST's approach will be to encourage ICTs not as an extension of the traditional classroom, but as a tool to promote the use of learning strategies. Palestinian teacher education programs do not model technology use to accomplish the objectives in the courses they teach, nor do they teach students how to use information technology for instruction. Establishing relevant and appropriate standards and benchmarks for the introduction of ICTs, and incorporating these standards into the first two points above will be an important element of the reform process.

AMIDEAST proposes a variety of activities or interventions that correspond to the four targeted areas described above, as well as the NTES implementation plan.

Curriculum reform based on key competencies

- Research & Study Tours (RST): Targeted and expedited development of new programs, such as early childhood education, special education or school counseling by sending teams of Palestinian faculty and MOEHE representatives to US and/or MENA region institutions. RST teams review, research, adopt and tailor entire new BA curricula programs which are then accredited by AQAC.
- Support new Collaborative Projects in Teaching which address discipline specific curriculum development needs integrated with key competencies and assessment thresholds.
- Visiting scholars invited on behalf of select university education programs to provide specialized training based on a PFDP needs assessment and/or World Bank self-assessments.
- Host an annual conference specifically targeting those in the field of teacher education that encourages exchange of curriculum development and the presentation of research.
- Create a local faculty exchange program that supports faculty, both lecturers and administrators, from the two teacher education programs to visit each other, engage in peer observation, exchange course materials and discuss teaching pedagogy.
- Support the development of a quality, peer-review teacher education journal.

Integration of theory and practice through university/school partnerships

- Review select curricula and develop modules that correspond to key competencies for teachers so that theory and practice are closely and alternately interwoven.
- Identify school clusters associated with relevant teacher education programs and develop working partnerships.
- Establish student/teacher internship program with appropriate mentoring and coaching.

Faculty development of university trainers

- Expand existing Seminar for Excellence in Teaching and target faculty in teacher education programs.
- Send Palestinian faculty, particularly in high priority fields corresponding with RST teams to exceptional US university teaching colleges with foci in relevant specialties for one year certificate and/or MA focused on course development, research and pedagogy.

Integration of ICTs into teacher training

- Support CPT with a focus on developing standards and benchmarks for integration of ICTs in teaching education.
- Re-imagine education technology courses currently taught with an aim to integrating IT skills into subject areas, such as math, science, history, Arabic & English.
- Construct a community space through the Global Learning Portal that specifically brings faculty from each teacher education program together through a focused orientation, action agenda and designated local web facilitators.
- Access to relevant online journals as well as an “e-granary” of teaching resources in Arabic and English.

The PFDP was designed by AMIDEAST, OSI and USAID in 2005 with a seven year horizon. The next four years provide an opportunity for USAID to expand into new areas previously unforeseen. The timing for working with select university pre-service teacher education programs is fortuitous given the release of the NTES, defined MOEHE priorities and the ground work already conducted by the World Bank and UNESCO. The PFDP has a dedicated, seasoned staff and a three year track record of successfully meeting assigned deliverables. This draft concept targets university pre-service education in ways that directly support basic education, as well as address the PFDP aims. Expansion as described in this proposal will lead to more meaningful support for Palestinian education and closer engagement with the MOEHE policy priorities.